

### MEETING NOTES

#### CITY OF SAINT PAUL

DATE: October 13, 2011

LOCATION: Como Street Car Station

ATTENDING: Kelly Mitchell, Dan Marckel, Mark Ross, Paul Kolias, Deb Robinson, Lynn Gallandat, Tony Aruidon, Jim Henricksen, Triesta Brown, Elizabeth Stiffler, Tom Dapper, Linda

Youngwirth, Kathy Korum, Alice Messer, Don Ganje.

NOTES BY: Alice Messer All Mess

#### DISCUSSION TOPICS:

## Alice Messer briefly recapped direction received from September task force meeting:

- Provide centralized play area and limit circulation through the play area due to uncomfortable feeling of walking through
- Play area should reflect natural environment, no bright colors/plastic
- Swings were a high priority and explore providing separate swinging bay as well as incorporate swings into play area
- Explore small water play option.

Goal of meeting was to leave with direction on a single play area concept.

# Alice Messer presented three concept plans

# Concept 1 – "treetop play"

- Utilizes existing mature oak trees as the focal point of the play area where large cable climbing structures bring children up to the tree canopy where they are able to lay back in the nets and observe the trees at a height of 30'.
- Smaller rope climbing structure for the 2-5 year olds.
- Centralized play area with 3 bays of swings (2 bays of traditional swings, one bay of infant and an accessible swing).
- More traditional play elements would also be included to provide spinning, balancing and jumping. A small sand area would also be included for digging.
- Benches provided in the shade where parents could view the entire play area.

## Concept 2 - "landform play"

- Sculptural approach by providing a series of berms (mounds) located in a circle mimicking the form of a caterpillar at different heights allowing children to run up and down encouraging non-scripted play.
- Custom slide is proposed as the mouth of the caterpillar with other play elements becoming the "legs" of the caterpillar. Tunnels, bridges and a climbing structure included so children could climb up and view the play area from a higher elevation.
- Smaller swing bay is provided with a single bay of traditional swings as well as infant and

HC swing.

• Benches provided where parents can watch their children from the shade.

## Concept 3 – "woodland stream play"

- Provides a natural based play area focusing on sand and water play.
- A mound is created with a path to the top where a water pump is provided. Water can be pumped into the stream bed that flows down the hill. Children can manipulate the stream by shutting and closing different gates and dams.
- The stream channel would be created with inlayed stones and rocks mimicking a natural rock stream bed.
- The water pump would be connected to a 1" water service, but water only flows when the actual arm is pumped. Water will not flow if the arm is left up. 1/8<sup>th</sup> of a gallon of water is released with each pump and the water would infiltrate back into the ground via a drywell (similar to a drinking fountain.)
- Higher maintenance required with water feature and will have to be shut off in the winter like drinking fountain.

#### Swings

- Explored option of providing separate swing bay located far enough away from the play area so children are not running back and forth between the two.
- Preferred option is south of the play area, sits above the hill and looks down on the fire
  pits. It could be framed by two beautiful oak trees and provide a more tranquil swinging
  experience.
- Explore bench swing option as they offer more private swinging experience. There is the opportunity to incorporate these into the play area as well.

## Community comments/questions included:

- 1. Concerns/questions regarding berm/landform play:
  - Intrigued by berm/landform play concept, but concern expressed with berms blocking views of play area and impacting flat plateau of existing landscape
  - Discussed success of berms being used by all children at St. Clair play area
  - Concern with tunnel through berm make sure narrow enough to only fit one person and have good visibility through
- 2. Concerns with climbing structures:
  - Tall climbing options were too large for the site and focused on older children.
  - Concern about not being HC accessible
  - Explore providing separate 2-5 play area
- 3. Concerns with water play:
  - Higher maintenance associated with water play
  - Water play focused on seasonal usage and not available year round
  - Water play is not desired play element in play area
- 4. Discussed providing separate swing bay overlooking fire pits.
  - Provide smaller swinging bay for infants as part of play area
  - Swing bay "option 1" was preferred

- 5. Discussed existing pathway around play area
  - Existing seating around play area encourages parental focus inward towards play area. Path around play area also helps contain sand and allows for bicycling/tricycles use. Interest in incorporating into new play area.
- 6. Question about maintenance different maintenance requirements required of each concept.
  - Water play has highest maintenance requirements.
  - Climbing structures and berms require similar maintenance costs, but will also depend on surfacing provided.
  - Sand and mulch surface require more maintenance with replacement and tracking of material through site.

# General consensus on concepts included:

- Provide more distinct play areas for 5-12 age group and 2-5 age.
   Important to have place for smaller children to play separate from older children.
- Explore incorporating climbing elements, berms, infant swings and 2-5 play area into one concepts
- Two walkways into play area and provide additional bicycle racks.

#### Actions:

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- Alice to develop revised concept plans based on comments. Alice will develop received concepts based on concepts and forward to task force via email for comment prior to November meeting.
- Alice to check on number of existing handicap accessible picnic tables surrounding play area. Research if additional accessible tables are required.
- Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, November 16, 2011 from 6:30 to 8:30, Como Streetcar Station
- o Presentation materials posted on project website at: <a href="http://www.stpaul.gov/index.aspx?NID=4618">http://www.stpaul.gov/index.aspx?NID=4618</a>

Please contact Alice Messer at 651-266-6412 if any items are missing from the meeting notes or items were listed incorrectly.